



HARTFORD STREET ZEN CENTER

57 Hartford Street San Francisco, California 94114 Telephone: (415) 863-2507

Newsletter

July, August, & September '90

**A Lecture by Issan Dorsey
Ojai Foundation 24 Mar 90**

(Transcribed from a tape recording)

The encounter with death... begins at birth. Not when we are actually sick and dying. So Baker-roshi, my teacher, had me speaking about the fact that it should be our practice to keep in front of us, all the time "I certainly am going to die." "I certainly am going to die."

When I was listening to his lectures, I always said, "Oh, I understand that, I know that." Because I had been close to death many times in my life. Also, I had already begun some minimal work with people with AIDS. This is before living at Hartford Street Zen Center. In my mind, I felt I understood what that meant, "I certainly am going to die."

But, lo and behold, when I had my HIV test in Santa Fe, and it was positive, the relationship [chuckling] with "I certainly am going to die." changed. Radically. And then all along the way. You know, the first time I became sick... after I went through those initial changes, and came back to San Francisco, I felt quite healthy, and had a lot of energy. I was helping to establish more the practice place at Hartford Street Zen Center, giving classes and lectures, and thinking about how we might involve

ourselves with the AIDS epidemic. We made a lot of great changes at Hartford Street then, and it took a lot of energy. Without the help of this man here [David Sunseri] I never could have done it. We never could have done it. Then when we burned out [laughter] Steve came. Actually, when I started getting sick, I called Steve and Angelique, who were living here at Ojai, to come.

I had been given permission, actually instructed by Baker-roshi, to speak to people about my reactions and feelings about AIDS at that time. I had been reading the Santa Fe Recorder, and there was something in a short article that I thought was appropriate.

There is a sign on the wall at the New Mexico AIDS Service, Santa Fe Office, that illustrates the feeling of the men and women who work for the fledgling organization dealing with AIDS patients, their family and loved ones. It is of paramount concern. "- One must live as if it would be for ever, and as if one might die each moment." the sign read. Always both at once.

It's too bad that it took such an epidemic for us to begin to think this way. That we have, as it said in the video we watched yesterday, not only the oppor-

tunity, but the responsibility to spend time with people who are dying. Probably my great-grandmother had her whole family with her when she died. But, my grandmother died in an old-age home.

Baker-roshi had said "I think the most basic meditation for realizing impermanence must be, of course, 'I certainly am going to die.'" It's something we could meditate on... keep in front of us all the time. Not with sadness, but just ... Somewhere along the way we came to think it was unfortunate to be sick, and to get old, and to die. If sickness, old age and death are unfortunate, then certainly, so is birth.

[Quoting again, from Baker-roshi] "How do we get rid of the idea that somehow an exception is going to be made for us. It means to withdraw your primary energy from your plans. Unglue your energy-glue from your plans. To know you certainly are going to die is ultimate non-possession. To know it and meditate on it. You don't even possess your life. So if you really know for certain you are going to die, today or tomorrow, you are in the middle of dying right now. It won't be so difficult to take your energy out of your plans. Your plans are important, but not as the primary value in your life. The primary value in the structure of Buddhist practice should be residing in your breath-mind. If you can do that, it simplifies life a whole lot. To reside in your breath-mind."

So we don't think that you've got some secret plan that you've got to fulfill ahead of time to die right now. I was talking with Alan Marlowe on the phone the other day. He was at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center, maybe a few weeks before he died. We were old friends, so we were talking to each other,

and I knew he's sick. They say he's sick and he's going to die. In my mind I'm thinking, it can't be true, he was just here a year ago, and he was healthy as a horse.' But he sounded kind of sick, and he said, "I feel very good about dying. I've done everything I had to do, and I'm going to die." And I said, "Well, I can't die, because I have these kids I have to ordain, [laughter] and there's a lay ordination coming up, and a priest ordination, and a Mountain Seat Ceremony coming up." And he said, "It's true, you can't die yet," [Laughter] "But I can." And in fact he did. He died! [Laughter]

To keep in front of you, "I certainly am going to die" all the time. We forget. Cause even now, if I have quite a few healthy days in a row, my whole attitude changes, until all of a sudden I get another little CKKCH! [makes a jabbing motion] saying "Hey, you certainly are going to die."

Issan and the Abbotship

On June 10 there was a meeting of the Hartford St. Zen Center Board of Directors to discuss Issan's health and the succession of the Abbotship. As most of our Sangha probably knows Issan is quite ill at present with AIDS related lymphoma. He is undergoing an 18 week treatment of chemotherapy which unfortunately makes him feel very sick and weak at times. At this point it is too early to tell what results the treatment will give. It is a wait and see situation.

At the board meeting Issan expressed his wish that Kijun Steve Allen succeed him as Abbot of Issanji/Hartford St. Zen Center. His wish received the support of the board. The Mountain Seat Ceremony has not been scheduled.

Interim Month

August will be our interim month. There will be no scheduled events: Lectures, one-day sittings, open meals, classes or ceremonies. We will continue to be open for daily zazen and services, Monday through Friday.

Practice Period

There will be a practice period this fall at Issanji. It will be led by Zenshin Philip Whalen. This is an opportunity for us to deepen our practice and to integrate it more fully into our daily lives. It can be difficult to follow the daily schedule and still work a full time job as well as have a social life, but it can also be greatly rewarding to see how these aspects of our lives enrich each other. It will also be quite a challenge to do the practice period while continuing to run the hospice.

The practice period will begin on Saturday, September the 8th with the opening ceremony and end with a 7 day Rohatsu (Buddha's Enlightenment) Sesshin and closing ceremony on Saturday, December the 8th. The daily schedule will be:

5:00 am	Zazen
5:40	Kinhin
5:50	Zazen
6:30	Service
7:00	Soji
7:15	Oryoki Breakfast
Noon	Service
6:00 pm	Zazen
6:40	service
8:30	Zazen/tea/Class
9:10	End of Day

The weekly schedule will be:

Sunday: 9:20 am Zazen

10:00 Lecture

11:00 Tea and Discussion

Monday to Friday - see daily schedule

Saturday is the day off.

There will also be 3 one day sittings and the following ceremonies: Shuso (head monk) entering ceremony, Shosan (formal questioning of head of practice), Shuso ceremony (formal questioning of shuso by former shusos and participants in the practice period), Buddha's Enlightenment ceremony.

We realize that some people won't be able to follow the schedule completely due to work or prior commitments but we encourage you to participate as fully as possible.

Tokudo

Sometime this fall there will be a priest ordination for David Sunseri and Harper Leah. David is a resident at Issanji and Harper currently lives in Santa Fe. They are presently sewing their okesas.

Membership Meeting

There will be a meeting of the general membership Sunday, August 14th at 4 pm. All current members are invited to attend.

Missing

There are two pictures missing from Issanji. One is of Dogen and the other is a blue colored print of the medicine Buddha. The Dogen was a gift to Issan from Suzuki-sensei which she brought from Eihei-ji. If anyone knows their whereabouts would you please inform us.

REMINDERS FROM THE PRACTICE COMMITTEE

Please arrive in time to get completely settled before zazen begins. If entering at interval or Kinhin, please arrive early and wait for the bell.

It is not necessary to bow when exiting the Zendo. Please bow when entering or walking in front of the altar.

Please do not borrow cushions, cleaning supplies, candles, or incense. Please do not move cushions from reserved seats.

Please feel invited to learn to carry incense, ring bells, etc.

Thank you.

Daily Schedule

Monday through Friday:

Zazen	6:00 am
Interval	6:25 am
Zazen	6:30 am
Service	6:55 am

Zazen	6:00 pm
Service	6:40 pm

Sunday:

Informal period of zazen at 9:00 am, Lecture 10:00 am, followed by discussion and tea. Donation requested.

Monday:

Zazen orientation and instruction for newcomers, 5:30 pm. If you cannot come at this time, please call and arrangements can be made for another time.

Events Calendar

Sunday	July 1	One day sitting
Friday	July 6	Full Moon Bodhisattva Ceremony, 6:40pm
Tuesday	July 10	Angie Boissevain of Jikoji will speak at 8:00pm. Donation requested.
	August	Interim. No scheduled events except daily (M-F) zazen and service.
Tuesday	Sept 4	Full Moon Bodhisattva Ceremony, 6:40pm. Guest speaker to be announced, 8:00pm
Saturday	Sept 8	Practice period opening ceremony
Sunday	Sept 9	One day setting, 5:00am to 5:00pm

MAITRI AUCTION

In May we had the second annual auction for Maitri Hospice. This year was the biggest and best ever. There were over 300 items donated by over 200 people and businesses. The full dinner buffet and live music were new this year. The approximate figures were: gross \$13,500 expenses of \$2,500 which netted \$11,000. This money will last for just over 2 months.

The circle of friends has contributed about \$14,000 this year. We are hoping to reach our goal of \$30,000 by the end of the year. For all of those who have joined our circle of friends and those who contributed to the auction we would like to express our gratitude for your support.

OBITUARIES

Several of our hospice residents have passed away since the last newsletter. Bruce Colette was a resident for only 2 weeks. Clyde Cain died after only 1 week with us. Harry Davi was a long-time resident of approximately 9 months. Leo Barnhart was the longest resident at about 16 months. Excerpts from his obit in the B.A.R. follow.

HERBERT "LEO" BARNHART

SEPT 12, 1941 - APRIL 29, 1990

Leo Barnhart was born in Del Norte, Colorado. He passed away in the care of the Maitri Hospice on Hartford Street where monks, friends, and family participated in a Zen ceremony for the departed spirit on May 5th.

Leo had lived in Denver, Los Angeles, and San Francisco before returning to Canon City, Co. where he spent some years as a monk at the Benedictine Holy Cross Abbey. After leaving the religious life, he returned to live in San Francisco in 1987.

A few days before Leo died he was sitting on the steps in front of the hospice when one of the staff came out and remarked what a beautiful day it was. Leo agreed, however, when the staffer added, "Well, enjoy the rest of this beautiful day," Leo replied, "I have other plans."

NEW RESIDENT

Gordon Walters is a new resident that we welcome to Maitri.

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MEMBERSHIP

Hartford Street Zen Center welcomes your interest and participation. The following categories suggest ways for you to express your on-going commitment to support its resident priest, its sittings, services, lectures, classes, programs and its zendo facilities:

- **Practicing Member** - Those who practice at Hartford Street on a regular basis and/or have established a practice relationship with Issan Dorsey may consider becoming a practicing member (suggested monthly pledge \$40). Interested individuals who wish to become practicing members are invited to make an appointment to discuss their practice with Issan.
- **Supporting Member** - Those who wish to insure that the activities at Hartford Street continue, though they may not regularly attend them, may consider a supporting membership (suggested monthly pledge \$25).
- **Affiliate Member** - Those who are practicing members of an affiliated Zen Center who also wish to support the practice at Hartford Street may consider an affiliate membership (suggested monthly pledge \$10).

Category of membership that you are interested in:

☐ Practicing Member ☐ Supporting Member ☐ Affiliate Member

Monthly pledge that you wish to make:

☐ \$10 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$40 Other \$ _____

I will remit my pledge:

☐ Annually ☐ Semi-Annually ☐ Quarterly ☐ Monthly Other _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Signature: _____

Thank you very much.

Please Note: Hartford Street Zen Center is a California Non-Profit Religious Corporation; your monthly pledge or donation is tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

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